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Carl Jr., The Mighty Warrior

My high school senior class was one big family. We were the Martin Warriors. My graduating class had about eight hundred students. We lost one. Eight hundred students seem like a lot, but when one is gone, it makes a huge difference. On January 12, 2015, Carl Wilson Jr. was murdered. Carl was such a loving person. Every time I passed him in the hallway he would smile and say “what’s up,” and most of the time he would say a joke just to make me laugh. He had a son named King whom he cared so much about. Any shoe Carl had, King would have a pair, too. “Everything I do is for my son, King,” Carl Jr. always said. I had never seen a teenager love his son as much as Carl did.

Although we were in high school, Carl was more mature than most students. He lived on his own, took care of his son, bought his own things, and took care of his family. On top of that he played football and was able to balance sports and his classwork while preparing to graduate. I had never met someone with such a big heart and huge aspirations until I met Carl. Though Carl and I had different goals in life, I looked up to him, not only as a friend, but he was the older brother I never had. I remember January 12, 2015 like it was yesterday. It was a cold, exhausting afternoon. I went home to take a nap before I had to get up and start my homework. When I woke up I had plenty of text messages from my classmates. One read, “Did you guys hear what happened to Carl?” Another read, “Omg how will King cope with this?” At that point I had no idea what was going on. I saw a couple of photos with police cars surrounding a body, but I said to myself, this can’t be the Carl I know. I was very confused, so I called my best friend to make sure it was the same person I knew. When she picked up the phone, she was crying. At that moment my heart dropped. I couldn’t feel anything. I just sat on the side of my bed for a

couple of minutes to try and piece together the information I had just received. The last time I saw Carl was at 2:38 that day. I remember the time because I saw him outside my classroom as I anxiously waited on the bell to ring so I could go home. That following night I went to my high school to go and pray with some students. That was the worst day of my senior year. The only thing I could do then was pray. Pray for peace, patience, and hope.

The following morning it was very dark and cold. I drove to the parking lot and just sat in my car. When I pulled up, Fox 4 news was interviewing students. I wore black that day. Everyone wore black that day. Martin High School had lost a warrior, but heaven gained an angel. School was very depressing that day. The hallways were quiet, and the announcements were very dry. During lunch, many students gathered in the gym to sing, hold hands, and pray for Carl and the loved ones he left behind. Carl didn't deserve what happened. He was such an outstanding student with a bright future. I had never lost a friend so close to me before, so this was very new to me. My heart was very heavy that week, but at the funeral I felt relieved. I got to say a final goodbye to my friend. Ever since then, everything I do is for Carl. I know that he wouldn't want to see any of us sad or crying. He would probably say something to make us laugh if he were here. January was a rough month for me but I am WARRIOR STRONG. At graduation, on June 7, 2015, the head football coach received Carl's diploma and the crowd stood up in awe. That day we honored Carl with a moment of silence. I know he's always watching over us and especially his son, King. This incident altered my life, and it made me realize that tomorrow isn't promised. Therefore I live my life and love as much as I can before my time is up.

Last week, Carl's murderer was captured. It took a little over a year to capture him, but he is finally behind bars. The news really put a smile on my face. I felt really good inside that

day. I view life differently now, and I will always have Carl in my heart. I will never forget about him and I know that one day I will be reunited with my friend again. Writing about Carl used to be hard, but now it feels good to tell people about the wonderful person I knew. Heaven truly gained an angel.